

# Hyperthyroidism in dogs

Owner information sheet





Your rescue dog has a condition called Hypothyroidism, which means an underactive thyroid. The thyroid gland sits in the neck and it produces the hormone thyroxine (T4), which has wide ranging effects in the body but is most important for regulating metabolism and also promoting healthy skin, fur & nails.

In Hypothyroidism the thyroid gland has become unable to produce T4. Clinical signs include:

- Obesity
- Lethargy
- Reduced fertility
- Poor hair coat
- Weakened skin barrier

This condition is diagnosed by the means of a simple blood test to measure T4 level. In dogs with Hypothyroidism the T4 will be low.

Once the dog has been diagnosed as having the condition it is started on a three-week course of treatment to artificially supplement the T4 levels, and then a repeat blood test is taken to check that the T4 level is back up to normal.

If the T4 level is normal, then the animal will be discharged from the Scottish SPCA. If the T4 level is not normal, then the medication will be adjusted until the correct level of treatment is reached. Only once the blood test shows that the animal's condition is well controlled will we be happy for an animal to be homed.

The treatment for this condition is a Levothyroxine tablet or liquid given once a day for the rest of the dog's life.

It is important that you attend your local vets regularly for check-ups and repeat blood tests which will monitor the T4 level, the aim is often to take bloods every 3-6 months.

Overall, the prognosis for dogs with this condition is good to excellent.

#### WHAT DOES THIS MEAN FOR MY RESCUE PET AND ME?

Your dog has a long-term condition which requires lifelong medication. You have been given 1 month's treatment free of charge as part of your rehoming package from the Scottish SPCA, however as the new owner you will be financially responsible for any future medication. It would be worth discussing a written prescription for medication with your vet as this can be a cost saving measure. Please remember that it is very likely that your chosen Pet Insurance Provider will exclude this condition, therefore you will need to be ready to meet the financial needs of treating your pet for the rest of its life. We strongly advise you to talk to a range of Pet Insurance companies for more information on their policies and what they will cover your pet for.